

Information for people exposed to COVID-19

How will I know if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

As the number of people with COVID-19 increases, NSW Health is focusing on contacting people at highest risk of catching/contracting COVID-19. **You may not receive a text message or call from NSW Health after being exposed to a person with COVID-19.**

We ask people with COVID-19 to tell the people they have spent time with from the 2 days before they started having symptoms or 2 days before they tested positive (whichever came first) that they have COVID-19.

If you are told by someone that you have been in contact with a person with COVID-19, use this advice to understand your risk and what you can do to protect yourself, your family and your community.

Who is at risk of getting infected?

The risk of infection with COVID-19 increases with:

- the amount of time you spent with the person with COVID-19 and how closely you interacted with them
- if you were indoors (the risk is lower if you were outdoors)
- if you or the person were wearing masks (the risk is much lower if you were both wearing masks).

Vaccination decreases the risk of getting COVID-19, but this protection reduces over time and can be less effective against certain variants of COVID-19, such as Omicron. Booster doses significantly help increase this protection, including for the Omicron variant. Vaccination is also important in protecting against severe disease. Everyone should get their booster as soon as they are eligible.

To book your COVID-19 vaccination please visit the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

How long am I at risk for?

After being exposed to someone with COVID-19 you are at risk of getting it for 14 days. Most people who develop COVID-19 will get it in the first 7 days and so this is when you are at highest risk. However, approximately 25% of cases will develop COVID-19 between day 7 and 14, so you are at risk for up to 14 days.

What should I do if I have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19?

Your risk of getting COVID-19 will be based on the type of contact you had with a person who has COVID-19. When thinking about your testing and isolation requirements, think about your circumstances, including the risk you could infect vulnerable people you live or work with.

All people exposed to someone with COVID-19 should watch carefully for [symptoms](#). If symptoms occur, have a rapid antigen test (RAT) immediately. See the table below for more information on what to do next.

What are my legal requirements?

If you live with someone who has COVID-19 then you must follow the [NSW Health Self Isolation Guidelines](#) and self-isolate for 7 days. You must also follow the NSW Health Self-Isolation Guidelines for 7 days if you have been notified to do this by NSW Health.

If your exposure to COVID-19 was someone outside of your household, please assess your own personal risk using the table below. Consider the nature of your contact with the person with COVID-19 and your own personal circumstances, such as the risk that you could infect the people you live or work with, especially if they have conditions that make them more susceptible (for example, chronic illness, or on chemotherapy).

What are some examples of high and low risk exposures?

Use this table to assess your risk of COVID-19, and what to do, if you are told you are a contact of someone with COVID-19.

About you	Risk of COVID-19	What do I need to do?
I live with someone who has COVID-19 (I am a household contact)	High	<p>You must follow the Self-isolation guideline and self-isolate for 7 days from the last time you were in contact with the COVID-positive person.</p> <p>Have a rapid antigen test (RAT) as soon as possible and again on Day 6. Have an additional RAT if you develop symptoms.</p> <p>If all tests are negative, you can leave isolation after 7 days.</p> <p>If you get a positive result, you should continue your isolation and follow the Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home advice.</p> <p>Do not visit high-risk settings (healthcare, aged care, disability care, correctional facilities) for the next 7 days after leaving isolation.</p> <p>For more information, see Get tested for COVID-19.</p>
<p>I spent a long time with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g. I stayed overnight at their house or I spent the evening indoors at the house)</p> <p>or</p> <p>I interacted closely with someone who has COVID-19 and we were not wearing masks (e.g. we drove a long distance together, or I looked after children who are now positive.)</p>	High	<p>Self-isolation for 7 days from the last time you were in contact with the person with COVID-19 is the most effective way of protecting others.</p> <p>Have a rapid antigen test (RAT) as soon as possible and again on Day 6. Have an additional RAT if you develop symptoms. If all tests are negative, you can leave isolation after 7 days. If you get a positive result, you should continue your isolation and follow the Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home advice.</p> <p>If your child was exposed in an early childhood education centre (preschool or childcare), the centre will advise you what to do.</p> <p>For more information, see Get tested for COVID-19.</p> <p>For a further 7 days after leaving isolation, you can help prevent spread of COVID-19 by following the recommendations under How can we all help slow the spread of COVID-19?</p>
I spent some time with a person who has COVID-19 (e.g. we had dinner together or met at a pub, club or other social function.)	Moderate	<p>If you do not have symptoms, it is recommended that you have a rapid antigen test as soon as possible.</p> <p>A second rapid antigen test on Day 6 after exposure can also help to identify early infection.</p> <p>If symptoms occur, have a rapid antigen test immediately.</p> <p>If you get a positive result, you should continue your isolation and follow the Testing positive to</p>

		COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home advice.
I had brief or distanced contact with a person with COVID-19 (e.g. I dropped off shopping, or we went for a walk outdoors), or I received a case alert in the Service NSW App.	Low	Monitor for symptoms. If symptoms occur, have a rapid antigen test (RAT) immediately. If your RAT is negative, self-isolate and do another RAT in 24 hours, or get a PCR test and self-isolate while you wait for your result. If your second test is negative, stay in isolation until your symptoms have gone. If you get a positive result, you should continue your isolation and follow the Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home advice

For additional information for workplace-based exposures refer to [NSW Government - Guidance for businesses with a worker who tests positive for COVID-19](#).

How can we all help slow the spread of COVID-19?

There are simple steps we can all take to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

- Don't go anywhere if you are sick. Get tested immediately and isolate until you receive a negative result.
- If you are in the moderate or high exposure category, do not visit high-risk settings (healthcare, aged care, disability care, correctional facilities); if you are in the low exposure category and you need to visit one of these settings, we encourage you to do a rapid antigen test just beforehand and wear a mask while visiting.
- Stay 1.5 metres away from other people where possible and avoid crowds
- Wear a mask
- Clean your hands regularly with hand sanitiser or soap and running water for 20 seconds
- Hold social gatherings outdoors, with limited numbers
- Check in to venues using QR codes where these are available.